By Kimi Mattig-Louria Posted July 18, 2019 In Advertising, Digital Advertising, Video

WHAT'S TRENDING IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING

WELCOME GEN Z

To understand what's going to be trending in digital advertising, we need to look toward the upcoming generation. Very soon, our largest population segment will be comprised of what we affectionately call Generation Z or Gen Z (this includes anyone born after 2001). By the end of 2019, Gen Z will comprise 32 percent of the global population, surpassing the millennials for the first time. Gen Z was raised in a different digital landscape than anyone before them, and it shows in the way they relate to the world.

Growing up with a cell phone in hand has greatly impacted the way Gen Z ingests and processes information. In order for today's businesses to reach them, marketers need to meet them in the environment in which they're most comfortable: cyberspace. The greater challenge for digital marketers is to deliver their messages in eight seconds or less, which has proven to be the average attention span of Gen Z. This is not surprising, considering the online world they grew up in. Armed with that knowledge, let's explore the current digital trends that reflect how the online world has adapted to meet our newest generation's needs.

THE VALUE OF VIDEO CONTENT

Thanks to the birth of YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, Snapchat, Facebook Live, and other platforms, video is a super-hot digital trend that's still gaining momentum. With Gen Z being the digital natives they are, they consume close to 70 videos a day! From these, they acquire their news, educational tutorials, entertainment, and more. According to a report by Dr. James McQuivey of Forrester Research, a one-minute video has the same impact on a consumer as 1.8 million words, or thousands of pages of written content. It's clear that, in order to connect with today's consumer, marketing through video content is an absolute must.

More specifically, there is a growing demand for "Outstream" or "in-read" video content. Outstream video is stand-alone video content that is not injected into other video streams. It's also commonly referred to as "in-read" video, because it's usually presented in the midst of online content at a designated point in the text. At that point, the video appears and will stay until it plays through, unless the user scrolls away. What makes Outstream videos so appealing is that they relate to the content on the page the user is scanning rather than being randomly placed in an existing video stream. Think YouTube and "skip ad in 3 seconds." This growing relationship between user search and complementary video ad content leads us right into the next big trend: Content Personalization.

GETTING PERSONAL WITH CONTENT PERSONALIZATION

There is an increasing demand for content personalization from today's consumers on their digital shopping journey. Marketers have long understood that contextual advertising helps them cut through the clutter to reach segments of people through topic relevancy. The fresher trend of content personalization goes a step further. Not only does it deliver targeted content based on what a particular audience is interested in, it engages each individual on a personal level. Why is this so important? Unlike previous generations, Gen Z expects customized content along their online shopping path.

For the most part, Gen Z doesn't mind offering up personal information, as long as it's exchanged for something meaningful. More self-aware than self-centered, they enjoy collaborating with brands so that they can provide products that best meet their wants and needs. So right now, marketers are collecting data and storing profiles of consumers in order to deliver a highly-tailored shopping experience, which Gen Z applauds. If you haven't yet begun to engage on this level, get started building consumer profiles and gaining loyalty. Speaking of aggregating data, let's look at the next now trend, which also appears to be here to stay.

A GENUINE NEED FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing is the ability of a computer learning system to react to a consumer's online actions by gathering, organizing, and storing data from their habits. AI then makes sense of this data and helps marketers provide consumers with highly relevant and individualized content. One marketing area that AI is exploding in is Chatbots.

Chatbots are computer programs that engage with humans 24/7–usually online–in text form. Think of them as an online concierge or personal assistant for a brand. Texting is a language that Gen Z has embraced most of their lives. Matter of fact, they *prefer* to talk to other people via text messages than in the flesh. Gen Z also really likes to engage and provide feedback to their brands. Not just that, they expect two-way communications with their brands 24/7. Add it all up and it's easy to see why Chatbots are trending with marketers. Next up: influencers.

THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS

Influencer Marketing is a marketing tool that leverages social media leaders with large audiences to promote their brand. Gen Z is well aware of the power of social media and is uncompromisingly protective of their online appearance. They trust the opinion of their fellow online consumers over brand messaging. Therefore, the opinion of the social media leaders they follow holds a lot of weight. Knowing this, companies are choosing to have digital-celebrities (who may or may not be famous outside the digital world) promote their brands on their social platforms.

Influencer Marketing is a subtle, yet powerful way to engage with a particular segment. If you haven't begun using an influencer and aren't sure where to start, many firms now specialize in providing brands the help they need to match up with influencers and launch their campaigns. You can find the top influencer marketing platforms here. Last trend: Omnichannel marketing.

ALL-INCLUSIVE OMNICHANNEL

Multichannel marketing just got passed up. The newest buzzword in the consumer shopping experience is "Omnichannel." Whereas multichannel was able to link a brick and mortar and online store with comparable marketing, they still remained segregated entities–even to the point of return prohibitions. Same brand, different worlds. Omnichannel has gone further by linking all possible shopping experiences with connective touchpoints. This has completely changed the shopper experience—and Gen Z'ers love it.

From technology to internal culture … and every sale item in between, Omnichannel is only so because of the connectivity it provides shoppers between all existing brand channels. Let's face it, after all we've covered, it should be given that Gen Z wouldn't likely settle for anything less than a seamless transaction experience across all channels, mobile, desktop and physical store. Omnichannel is a digital trend that everyone can embrace—one that will probably be around for quite some time.

LIVING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

The explosion of our digital landscape and its forward momentum continues to shape and reshape the way marketers and consumers relate to one another. With a strong influence by our largest growing population segment, namely Gen Z, today's top digital marketing trends include the following:

- Videos, especially Outstream
- Content Personalization
- AI/Chatbots
- Influencers
- Omnichannel

Should your business need to catch up by adopting some or all of these marketing tools, we'd be happy to help. Just reach out to us and we'll get your company's digital momentum going.

Let's talk

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